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THE DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

WASHINGTON, D. C. 20505

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Copy 8

2 DEC 1975

Admiral George W. Anderson, Jr., USN (Ret.)
Chairman, President's Foreign Intelligence
Advisory Board
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear George:

In your letter of August 8, 1975, to the President you made some criticisms of last year's National Intelligence Estimate 11-3/8-74, "Soviet Forces for Intercontinental Conflict Through 1985." The letter is, of course, a fine example of your independent assessment of our intelligence product and advice to the President with respect to it.

Stemming from that letter, Brent Scowcroft requested my comments on certain recommendations for change in the current National Intelligence Estimate process. I responded to this in my letter to the President of 21 November 1975, a copy of which I made available to you. In this letter, I took some issue with the conclusions in your August 8, 1975, letter with respect to last year's National Intelligence Estimate. I pointed out that I had received the August letter only on 9 September, too far along in this year's NIE 11-3/8 process to divert the talents from that priority Estimate to respond to your August comments in detail. I suggested also that an examination of the 1975 Estimate might lead you to a different conclusion than you reached with respect to the 1974 Estimate.

At the same time, I believe that the statements in your August letter were so sweeping that they deserved a very specific response from our experts. I consequently requested them to develop the attached comments reflecting the statements about specific Soviet technical developments made in your August letter. I am sure we will have a chance to discuss these at our forthcoming meeting, and I believe these comments might help us to fix on specific matters at issue.

MORI/CDF Pages 1-2 & 4-13

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I am sending a copy of this to Brent Scowcroft, as I am concerned that the President might otherwise suffer under a very erroneous impression of the accuracy and seriousness of both the 1974 and the 1975 Estimates on this important subject.

Sincerely,

/s/ Bill

W. E. Colby

Attachment

cc: Assistant to the President
for National Security Affairs

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LETTER to PFIAB re comments on the PFIAB letter to the President

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COMMENTS PRIMARILY ON SPECIFIC SOVIET TECHNICAL DEVELOPMENTS MENTIONED IN THE PFIAB LETTER TO THE PRESIDENT

PFIAB	COMMENT
This NIE assesses that for the next ten years it is extremely unlikely that the Soviets will conclude they could launch an attack which would prevent devastating US retaliation. This judgment is presented confidently, with the force of fact, although the cumulative evidence on which it is based is conflicting, often flimsy, and in certain cases does not exist.	This finding in the NIE is labeled a key judgment and followed by five supporting judgments. The estimative words "extremely unlikely" are not intended to mean it is fact. It is our estimate supported by the evidence and discussion in the body of the NIE.
With respect to Soviet ICBM accuracy and the survivability of the US Minuteman force, the data is inconclusive and has been very differently interpreted by the experts. A number of uncertainties which have puzzled analysts for six years have been accommodated in the NIE by averaging the worst and best cases when the data could really support either interpretation.	Virtually all but one expert have come to essentially the same conclusion. We readily admit there are uncertainties. The NIE refers the reader to an Interagency Report which delineates those uncertainties and their effect on Soviet hard-target capabilities. In no case has any "averaging of worst and best cases" taken place; the uncertainties were in fact used in constructing the alternative forces analyzed in the estimate.
--the NIE gives the appearance of a net assessment and thus the added weight of "operational" consideration, when in substance it is not.	The presentation of the results of interaction or engagement analyses are intended to show the implications of Soviet force developments and are not intended to be "net assessments" of the effectiveness of US forces. Assessment of Soviet military capabilities, present and future, result from perceptions by intelligence of the interaction of

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PFIAB	COMMENT
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--the NIE...accepts optimistic and unproven data regarding US silo hardness.	The data used were provided by the CINCSAC--the operational commander of the Minuteman force--a source we would expect to be best informed on this subject.
Soviet ICBM Accuracy	
The hard data on both the presently deployed Soviet ICBM force and the new Soviet ICBMs does not allow any confident, precise determination of accuracy. [redacted] 25X1	We readily admit there are uncertainties. The "non-community" view has been questioned by informed and reasonable analysts in the community as involving hypothetical suppositions. In particular, the non-community view implies that in 1963 the Soviet Union had better inertial instruments than did the US at that time, a conclusion which can be refuted based on many data sources.

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PFIAB	COMMENT
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Concerning the new Soviet ICBMs --the SS-18 and SS-19-- there is no hard information indicating the basic guidance and control accuracy of these vehicles,	We point out in NIE 11-3/8-75 that the SS-18 and SS-19 do have problems, but we believe they can be solved. Accuracy figures for these missiles take into account anticipated Soviet correction of the malfunctions mentioned.
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malfunctions exhibited in the early flight tests of the US POSEIDON and MINUTEMAN III MIRV'd systems. One would expect, as in the case of the US systems,	
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comparable to that of MINUTEMAN II	(We assume PFIAB means that MM III, vice II,
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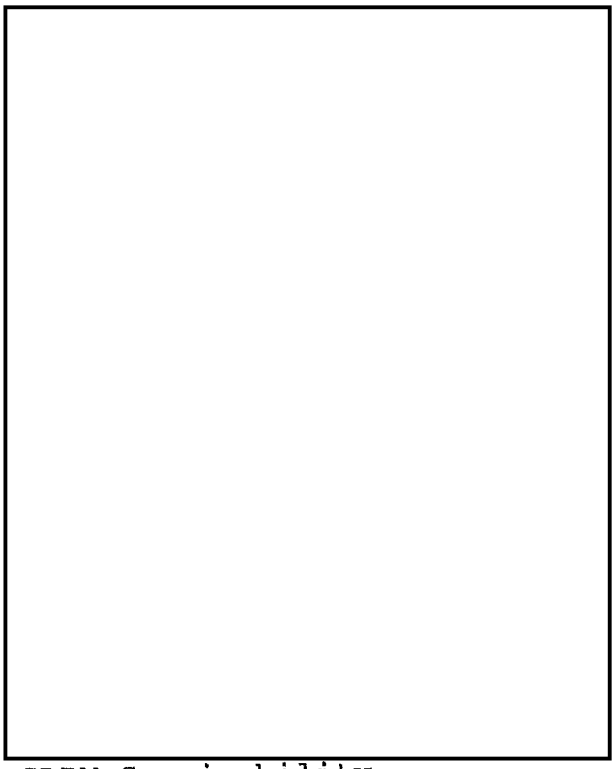

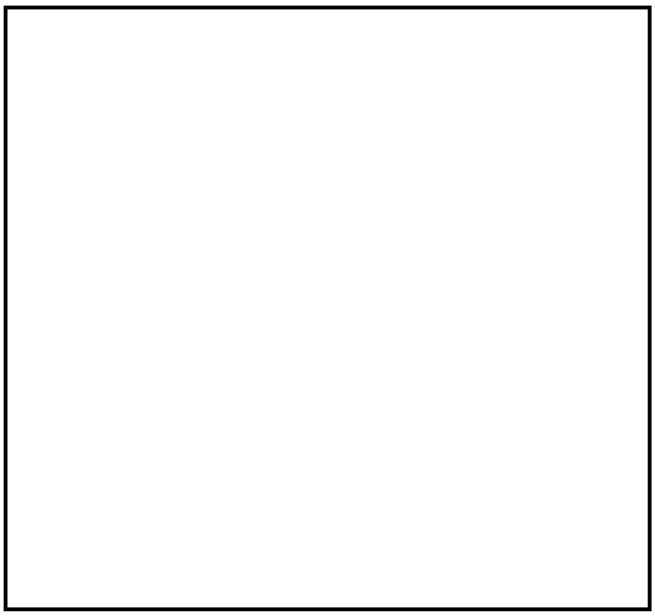

SLBM Survivability

The NIE asserts there should be little worry as to the survivability of the (US) SLBM force now or in the next 10 years.

The basis for the conclusion is spelled out in some detail in the body of the Estimate, so it is something more than an assertion. Treating the issues of current and future capabilities separately the reasoning behind this conclusion can be summarized: there is strong positive evidence of a current lack of Soviet ASW capability against the US SSBN force. Key elements of the evidence are the poor technical capabilities of equipment, the lack of capability to deploy platforms and equipment in all US SSBN operating areas, and the lack of a sizable number of contacts with US SSBNs. The Estimate also

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PFIAB	COMMENT
	addresses Soviet capability to impair the effectiveness of the SSBN force in the next ten years. Implicit in this formulation of the problem is destruction of a large fraction of the force and the accomplishment of this destruction in a time-critical fashion. Our principal reason for projecting a future lack of Soviet capability to meet this goal is our inability to identify any Soviet approach, either "classical" or nonconventional, for detection of deployed SSBNs which could meet either the numerical or time criteria. The lack of an effective Soviet detection capability is especially important in view of potential changes to the US SSBN force (particularly expanded operating areas).
This conclusion is based partially upon US superiority in "classical" ASW techniques, and partially on judgments that nonconventional techniques are unlikely to be highly successful.	True, the conclusion is a judgment and not demonstrated fact, but the reasons for the judgments are stated, and the full analytical backup is contained

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	began to become available when drafting of NIE 11-3/8-74 was almost finished. Initial analysis of this information did not indicate, however, that our judgments should be changed or hedged. Subsequent analysis during the past year has not altered our fundamental conclusion

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PFIAB	COMMENT
It is very possible that this technological area will yield capabilities not yet realized by the US R&D community...it may be a very long time before we are able to determine the nature of these new threats... it is imprudent to make judgmental conclusions that minimize the potential for a technological breakthrough...	25X1 While US investigations have not conclusively ruled out in all cases their potential for ASW, the range of technical possibilities for Soviet breakthroughs nonetheless appears small. Technology may in the future yield capabilities beyond our present understanding; our judgments are based on what we understand today. 25X1 We will almost never have proof in a mathematical sense. Therefore, we must state our best judgment on the basis of available information, and discuss our reasoning and the limitations on information.

Bomber Penetration

The conclusion that Soviet air defenses today are relatively ineffective against the planned US low altitude bomber strikes is based on a large amount of intelligence information which suggests two deficiencies. ...it is assumed that the most heavily deployed Soviet surface-to-air missile (SAM), the SA-2, which carries the burden of defense against low altitude penetrators, primarily carries a high-explosive (nonnuclear) warhead; second that the ground-controlled intercept (GCI) system which must direct the aircraft interceptors to their targets is relatively inaccurate against low-flying aircraft.	The assessed capabilities of the SA-2 system and the GCI network are based on exhaustive analysis of Soviet air defenses--they were not merely assumed. In addition to these two factors the analyses included: the deployment and capabilities of the SA-3; the lack of an AWACS; the inability of any system to destroy US SRAMS in flight; the lack of a lookdown/shootdown interceptor; the demonstrated inability of Soviet defenses to maintain track on low altitude targets during exercises; the deficiencies in most current Soviet air defense data handling and transmission systems; the demonstrated poor capability

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PFIAB	COMMENT
	to overcome ECM; and the probable disruption of the air defense system which would be caused by a ballistic missile attack. 25X1
	[redacted] SA-2 sites are fixed and therefore vulnerable to destruction by SRAM. The reference to GCI is correct.
...Soviet homeland air defense practice altered significantly about 1972. Prior to that time, fewer than 3 percent of the target aircraft were at altitudes below 500 meters...it is now about 30 percent....	These figures were not available for last year's NIE, but they are about correct as far as they go. Most US bombers will attack at altitudes between 150 and 250 meters. Only some 3 percent of Soviet air defense exercises occur at these altitudes. Further, our analysis of Soviet low altitude exercises shows that the defenses usually do very poorly against aircraft flying at about 500 meters and below.
The above change (in air defense exercises at low altitudes) may also reflect an improving capability against low altitude penetrators in a number of other areas where there are intelligence gaps, such as:	

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PFIAB	COMMENT
(1) improved GCI vectoring accuracy through better site-to-site and site-to-aircraft data links;	The Estimate says the Soviets are experimenting with new data links for air surveillance and that these could have air applications in support of GCI. The Estimate also says the Soviets have new ground-to-air data links. These links have never been noted in low-altitude intercepts and, even if so used, there are many other problems which must be overcome.
(2) employment of the mobile low-altitude SAMs of Ground Army Forces;	This is taken into account in Volume II. The improvement is a function of the location and availability of these forces, however.
(3) tactics such as radiation homing...to negate or degrade US electronic countermeasures;	No evidence, but technically possible. The US can counter radiation homing by changing the energy radiated by the various electronic devices aboard its bombers.
(4) ...a partial lookdown/ shootdown capability on MIG-23, which is now operational with the Ground Army Forces.	This is discussed in Volume II. Current estimates are that MIG-23 will be deployed with strategic defense forces.
For the longer term, many Soviet activities seen at their R&D facilities are not fully understood. A pole-mounted, mobile radar has been observed which could extend the low altitude coverage of existing SAMs or could form the basis for a new SAM system. A high performance SAM and SAM radar is being tested, probably for the ground forces, but which could have a dual capability for homeland defense. A variety of other types of air defense radars, some elevated, are undergoing unknown tests. 25X1	All of these activities were discussed in the NIE, and they are, in fact, not fully understood. But the best analysis available did not indicate that any of the systems which appeared to be under active R&D would, alone or in combination, constitute a major breakthrough in low altitude defense.

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PFIAB	COMMENT
Taken as a whole, the uncertainties inherent in a comprehensive assessment of Soviet air defense capabilities do not support the NIE view that "...it is unlikely that the Soviets will be able to cope with sophisticated low altitude attacks during the next 10 years."	The quoted judgment appears in Volume I; the analyses supporting this judgment are not fully laid out in Volume II. Despite the lengthy discussion which would have been required, perhaps they should have been. In any case, Volume II supports this statement for about five years--but not for ten. (The ten year picture is analyzed more fully in the NIE 11-3/8-75, and its conclusion is indeed more pessimistic.)

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